Tungag language

Tungag, or **Lavongai**, is an Austronesian language of New Ireland Province, Papua New Guinea.

Since Lavongai is an Austronesian language, it follows several of the unique characteristics of these groups of language. Several examples is the specific form for the singular, dual, trial and plural tense, the clarity of knowing if the person spoken to is included or excluded in the dual, trial and plural tenses, and the defining of the possessive tense expressed by an ending added to the noun. However, unlike the languages spoken in Papua New Guinea, it has not adopted and mixed with other languages.[3]

It is spoken on the island of New Hanover and its neighboring islands. There are different dialects of the Lavongai language. The major difference between the language dialects is between the villages of the south coast and the villages from the western tip to the islands on the north coast. There are also smaller differences between villages, but it does not have a major effect on the communication between these villages.[3]

Its endangered level (according to Ethnalogue) is 5, which means it is a language used frequently, so there is no fear that it will be endangered, but is not considered the main language of New Guinea.

Tungag	
Lavongai	
Native to	Papua New Guinea
Region	New Hanover Island, New Ireland Province
Native speakers	(12,000 cited 1990)[1]
Language family	Austronesian - Malayo-Polynesian - Oceanic - Western - Meso-Melanesian (New Ireland) - Tungag–Nalik **Tungag**
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	lcm
Glottolog	tung1290 (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/tung1290)[2

Contents

Phonology

Phoneme inventory of the Tungag language:[4]

Consonant sounds

		Labial	Alveolar	Velar
Plosive	**voiceless/tense**	p pː	t tː	k kː
	voiced/tense	b	d	g gː
Nasal		m mː	n nː	ŋ ŋː
Rhotic			r	
Fricative	**voiceless/tense**	ɸ	s sː	(x, ɣ)
	voiced	β, v		
Lateral			l lː	

/x, ɣ/ are allophones of /k, g/.

Vowel sounds

	Front	Back	
High	i	u	
Mid	ɛ	ʌ	ɔ
Low		ɑ	

Sound system

(Note: These references do not include /ɸ, β, x, ɣ, ɔ/ and germinate consonants)

Alphabet

In the Lavongai language, there are 21 letters - six vowels and 15 consonants. These letters are ʌ, a, b, d, e, f, g, h, i, k, l, m, n, ŋ, o, p, r, s, t, u, v.[3]

Vowels

In the Lavongai language, there are six vowels: a, e, i, o, u, ʌ.

The /ʌ/ is pronounced as the /uh/ in butter. The other vowels: /a/, /e/, /i/, /o/, /u/ are pronounced the same as their pronunciation in the Latin language. Thus they all can be pronounced as a long vowel or a short vowel. However, the /i/ retains its /i/ sound unlike the Latin language, in which the /i/ is pronounced as /y/ if the 'i' is behind another vowel.[3]

Consonants

In the Lavongai language, there are 15 consonants: b, d, f, g, h, k, l, m, n, ŋ, p, r, s, t, v.[3]

Many consonants can be replaced/deleted

'f' and 'p'

However to some, 'f' and 'h' are considered letters in the alphabet, but others do not.[3]

For the letter 'f', it can usually be replaced by the letter 'p'.

- kafil/ kapil - the headgear of the women
- difil/ dipil - to come back from fishing without result

While there are some cases where 'p' cannot replace 'f', the number of cases is very small.[3]

-
- tapak cannot become tafak
    - tafak - lightning
    - tapak - leprosy

'b' and 'v'

For the letter 'b', it can be replaced by 'v'[3]

- beŋebeŋe/veŋeveŋe - the hornbill
- bil/vil - to do, the deed
- bis/vis - to fight, the fight

'r' and 'd'

For the letter 'r', it can be replaced by 'd'[3]

- rauŋ/dauŋ - to kill, the killing
- ororuŋ/oroduŋ - to dream, the dream
- rokot/dokot - stick fast
- ruduai/duduai - to meet

'h'

For the letter 'h', unlike like the above letters , the letter 'h' is normally dropped. Dropping the letter 'h' in a word does not change the meaning at all.[3]

- hat/ at - stone
- hainʌ/ ainʌ - woman/female
- his/ is - nose

Diphthongs

In the Lavongai language, there are 7 diphthongs: /au/, /oi/, /ai/, /ei/, /ao/, /eu/, and /ua/.[3]

The diphthongs /au/, /oi/, /ai/ have the same pronunciation as "how", "high", and "boy" from the English language. However,the other diphthongs do not have a perfect sound.[3]

/au/

Regarding the diphthong /au/, it can sometimes replace the vowel 'a' if it is a three letter word and between two consonants and vice versa. This practice is more common in the dialects spoken on the north coast.[3]

- *sap* may be changed into *saup* - to beat
- *ŋat* may be changed into *ŋaut* - cut grass
- *tan* may be changed into *taun** - the day
- *ŋanvak* may be changed into *ŋanwauk* - the morning
- *ilesvak* may be changed into *ilesvauk* - tomorrow

However this replacement can not be done to every word. Listed below are some of the words that can not have use the 'a'/'au' replacement.[3]

- *vap* - "people"
- *nat* - "son"
- *mat* - "dead"
- *taun** - "to cook"

Note: taun has two meanings: "the day" or "to cook".

/ua/

Regarding the diphthong /ua/, it can sometimes be replaced with vowels 'o' or 'a'.[3]

- *a pua nat / a po nat* - "the boys"
- *a pua aina / a pa aina* - "the women"
- *a veua / a veo* - "the shark"

/ai/ and /ei/

Regarding the diphthongs /ai/ and /ei/, they can be exchanged with other.[3]

- *nei / nai* - in, the inner part, the intestines

- *vei / vai* - not, lest
- *veiniŋ / vainiŋ*

Grammar

Nouns

Proper nouns and mass nouns

These nouns are nouns that can not be marked with a possession mark, nor can be counted.[5]

- *kʌ-g Kerek* - my Kerek (Kerek is a name)
- *lamʌn* - water

Alienable and inalienably possessed nouns

Alienable nouns are nouns that have a possessive pronoun preceding the noun [5]

- *kʌ-mem ŋono posong* - our two names
- *kʌ-g aina* - my wife

Inalienable nouns are nouns that use a suffix to express possessive.[5]

- *pukun-ina* - its body
- *ŋur-uria* - their mouths

Counting numbers

When counting from one to 10, the Lavongai language counts based on groups of fives and tens.[5]

1 - 4

The numerals 1 through 4 are mono-morphemic words. [5]

- *sikei* - one
- *ponguʌ* - two
- *potol* - three
- *puat* - four

5

The numeral 5 is distinct with its two morpheme composition.[5]

- *pal-pal lima* - five

6 - 9

The numerals 6 through 9 are based on adding either 1 - 4 with the numeral 5.[5]

- *lima-le-sikei* - five-from-one / six

The words for 2 - 4 can be shortened by omitting the first syllable and changing 'o' to 'u'.[5]

- *puat → -at*
- *ponguʌ → -nguʌ*
- *potol → -tul*
- *lima-le-at* - five-from-four / nine

10

Likewise to the numeral 5, the numeral 10 also has a distinct two morpheme composition.[5]

- *sikei a sangauli* - te

Sentence structure

The Lavongai language follows the SVO (subject-verb-object) structure.[4]

Sentence Structure for Different Types of Sentences
Intransitive clause
Subject / Verb Phrase / Adjunct
Transitive clause (1 complement)
Subject / Verb Phrase / Direct Object / Adjunct
Transitive clause (2 complements)
Subject / Verb Phrase / Direct Object / Indirect Object /Adjunct
Transitive clause, speech and perception verbs (2 complements)
Subject / Verb Phrase / Direct Object / ta / Indirect Object / Adjunct
Negation on the Sentence level
Subject / parik / pa Verb Phrase / adjunct
Prohibition (Negative Imperative)
Subject / ago ta / Verb Phrase / Adjunct / -an / Direct Object
Coordinate Conjunction
Verb Phrase / Coordinating Conjunction / Verb Phrase
Subordinate Conjunction
Verb Phrase / Subordinate Conjunction / Verb Phrase
Fronted Object
Direct Object / Subject / Verb Phrase / Trace Object / Indirect Object / Adjunct
Fronted Verb Phrase
Verb Phrase / Subject

References

1. Tungag (https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/lcm/) at *Ethnologue* (18th ed., 2015)
2. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Tungag" (http://glottol og.org/resource/languoid/id/tung1290). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
3. Stamm, Josef. (1988). *Lavongai materials*. Beaumont, Clive H. Canberra, Australia: Dept. of Linguistics, Research School of Pacific Studies, the Australian National University. ISBN 0858833786. OCLC 20311552 (https://www.worldcat.org/oclc/20311552).
4. Karin E. Fast. 2015. Spatial language in Tungag. (Studies in the Languages of Island Melanesia, 4.) Canberra: Asia-Pacific Linguistics.
5. edited by John R. Roberts (1990). *Two grammatical studies*. Ukarumpa via Lae, Paua New Guinea: Summer Institute of Linguistics. ISBN 9980005424. OCLC 28219094 (https://www.worl dcat.org/oclc/28219094).